

Refugee Advisory Board Meeting
August 28, 2008
Utah Department of Community and Culture
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: Palmer DePaulis, Gerald Brown, Irina Pierpont, Mona Guet, Claudia Nakano, Mike Gallegos, Lina Smith, Patrick Poulin, Zaw Htike, Yolanda Francisco-Nez (for David Everitt), David Sundwall, Aden Batar, Ghulam Hasnain, Marty Kelly (for Brenda Hales), Lew Miller, Manuel Romero (for Lisa-Michele Church), Annette Babisz

Excused: Abdul Aljareh, Macleans Geo Ja-Ja, Saran Aisha Nahas, Johnny Wulah

I. Welcome & Introductions

Palmer welcomed the board members and called for brief introductions. Lewis Miller was introduced to the group as a new participant who will be leading the Board's fundraising efforts.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Refugee Advisory Board meeting held July 31, 2008 were accepted into record as submitted. The minutes were previously distributed to the members for review.

III. Utah Refugee Conference

Irina Pierpont reported that the Utah Refugee Conference will be held on November 14-15, 2008 at the Airport Hilton in Salt Lake City. The purpose of the conference is two-fold: 1) to educate service providers about the various needs of refugees, and 2) for refugees to learn about the specific resources that service providers can offer.

Anyone interested in serving on the steering committee to help organize the event should contact Irina directly at 801.538.9757 or ipierpont@utah.gov. The next planning meeting will be held at 4 pm on September 10th at the DWS office located at 1385 South State Street. Input and involvement from the board, community leaders and community-based organizations, will be important for a successful event. Board members were asked to share the conference information with their respective organizations and associations.

IV. Refugee Services Office Operational Issues

Gerald Brown reported on various operational issues and provided status updates:

- Published the beta version of the volunteer training module to the Internet. Members were encouraged to test it and provide feedback.
- Met with Salt Lake County, the Utah Non-profit Association and United Way to start the refugee services organization capacity building.

- Received inquiries on the refugee organization grant request. The deadline is October 8th.
- The website for the Refugee Services Office is ready to launch.
- Held refugee meeting on health. Clinic directors and emergency room personnel did not come, but need to be there in the future.
- Held first mental health meeting. Another one is planned in the next couple of weeks.
- The mentor training program is available online. Board members were asked to test it and give recommendations directly to Gerald. An email with specific information including the link, username and password will be sent next week.

V. Update on Case Management

Gerald Brown reported on the four populations of refugees in the valley that we are concerned with regarding case management: 1) new arrivals coming through IRC and CCS, 2) people that are here now and have been here less than 5 years and therefore are eligible for refugee services, 3) refugees who settled in other areas that choose to move to Salt Lake City, 4) people who have already been here for 5 years, and therefore are ineligible for federal funding, who still need some help.

The first efforts will be aimed only at new arrivals in Salt Lake City who come through IRC and CCS. Caseworkers and volunteers will be matched to families for up to two years to help provide direct and intensive case management. Since the last board meeting, meetings have been held with representatives from IRC, CCS, TANF and the Asian Association. It is possible that a major portion of this case management model can be funded with TANF money. The next step is to change the ratio of clients to case worker, and then present it to Helen Thatcher and Kristin Cox at DWS for approval. If the TANF dollars can come into play early, it will buy us some time to put other dollars together to continue the effort.

This Board will be the primary members to review and give input on case management, as all the key players are already represented. As this model is developed, the barriers and gaps need to be taken into consideration.

VI. Committee Discussion

At the last board meeting, the members agreed to establish committees to focus on key issues facing refugees and to 1) develop an operating model for the committees, 2) assist the chairs with creating a purpose statement and goals, and 3) help recruit committee members.

The status of each committee is as follows:

- Fund Raising Committee
Lew Miller, an attorney practicing in Salt Lake City, has agreed to help manage the fundraising committee and participate with the board in this

capacity. He has experience mentoring families through the IRC, and now does it individually. Members were asked to identify potential people who could serve on the committee and help open doors to funding opportunities.

The Refugee Services Organization has applied to American Express for a grants to contract for 1) alternative dispute resolution, and 2) a grant writer and someone who can also help develop a business plan. We need to get a number of grants into the pipeline. Some will take a while to mature, others will be denied, and some will require a historical track record.

- Housing Committee

Mike Gallegos reported that the Housing Committee has been meeting since last September, and initially came together at the request of Mayor Corroon to address the occurrence at Hartland Apartments and to identify some long-term solutions. The committee has put together information about the housing needs and hired a consultant to do an analysis on where the gaps are by different refugee groups.

The committee is in the process of developing a plan to create affordable housing for refugees. It will include a welcome center to provide services to those in the complex as well as in the community. The project is being developed without government assistance due to the rules and restrictions on tax requirements, income levels, etc. To construct a 30-40 unit complex and a welcome center, the cost will be about \$6.5 million. The group is considering a capital campaign to see if there is interest from any of the possible donors who are specifically interested in housing for refugees. Another option is to try to generate another \$3 million as an endowment to help cover the cost of the operation and case management of the facility for a total of \$9.5-\$10M. It was suggested that this be coordinated with Lew before pursuing to ensure this would not affect other fundraising efforts. A short-term solution may be tenant-based rental assistance for emergency housing needs for hard to serve refugees. The subcommittee will address these issues and report back to the board at the next meeting.

- Palmer DePaulis offered to contact the LDS Church to ask for a representative to participate with the group. It was noted that Mel Gardner is already serving on the Housing Subcommittee.

- Refugee Community Capacity Building Committee

Mona Guet reported that she is putting together a committee to develop ideas on how to help refugees from ethnic communities and to focus on capacity building. Some community organizations are already functioning and doing very well, while others are new and inexperienced. Refugees need leadership training, management skills, and information on how to start a non-profit, etc. Board members who are interested in

serving on this committee should notify Mona directly at 801.526.9796 or mguet@utah.gov.

Mike Gallegos suggested that the Refugee Conference might be a good opportunity to attract interest and get people involved.

Yolanda Francisco-Nez recommended including representatives from the SBDC and Utah MicroLoan Enterprise on the committee.

- Volunteer Committee

The committee, led by Laura Durrant, is in the process of being created. Its main purpose is to help supplement the reach with the case workers. The Asian Association offered their new volunteer coordinator. Representatives from the Board who are interested in serving should contact Laura directly at 801.526-9775 or ldurrant@utah.gov

Yolanda Francisco-Nez suggested utilizing students at colleges and universities who have a requirement to do some volunteer work.

- Refugee Health Committee

The Department of Health already runs a refugee health program and Medicaid for refugees. It was suggested that this committee can provide current advice about helping set refugee priorities and needs based on existing resources. It was cautioned that this committee refrain from becoming a forum for “what we don’t have” in refugee healthcare. Some suggestions include developing curriculum to help educate refugees on key health issues.

- Action: After Gerald speaks again with Theresa, Palmer, Gerald and David will meet to discuss the purpose of the committee and identify a chair. They will then bring their recommendations back to the board.

- Education Committee

The purpose of this committee is to look at education-related issues facing refugees and address what can be done given the current resources. Marty Kelly offered to chair the committee.

- Action: Palmer and Gerald will meet with Brenda and Marty and then report back to the board.

- Evaluation Committee

The purpose of this committee is to make sure that there is some oversight to everything the board is doing, and to ensure that there is follow-up and accountability. The barriers and gaps have already been identified, so this committee would track and evaluate outcomes.

Yolanda Francisco-Nez discussed several different kinds of evaluations and indicated that customer service might be one, and strengthening the strategic plan might be another.

VII. Other Business

OC Tanner has provided complimentary tickets for a free concert on Sep 20 at the LDS Conference Center. These tickets can be distributed to case workers and individual families, as an opportunity for those who don't have the financial means to otherwise enjoy this cultural experience. Contact Yolanda Francisco-Nez directly at 801.535.7734 to obtain tickets.

At 6 pm on October 23rd at City Hall the Mayor will engage in a dialogue about Discrimination. Yolanda will send a flyer to Gerald that can be disseminated throughout the board.

VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Refugee Advisory Board has been moved to 4 pm on Tuesday, September 23, 2008.